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March 20
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5 - 10 p.m.

a CMF XXV benefit
\$10 donation / \$5 students

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March 25
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www.grapemyrtlefest.org

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Leaders from across North Carolina discussed the fight for marriage equality and its impact on the range of issues our community groups are working on.

Leadership Summit Held

ENC, NC GALA Convene First Statewide LGBT Leadership Summit

LGBT Organizations from Greenville to Asheville were represented at the Statewide LGBT Leadership Summit, held Saturday, March 5 at Replacements Ltd. in Greensboro. More than 70 leaders representing over 50 LGBT and allied organizations from around the state participated in the meeting.

Equality NC Foundation and NC GALA Institute for Equal Rights convened the meeting to strengthen communication between LGBT organizations and leaders across the state.

"Equality NC and NC GALA organized this event because we believe that connecting leaders and fostering collaboration across organizational and regional barriers makes our movement stronger," said Ian Palmquist, Executive Director-Programs of Equality NC.

"The model for the Summit was based on the success of Equality Federation in brining leaders of statewide groups together; it made sense that local leaders within North Carolina could learn so much from each other as well."

The program began with each group giving a very brief summary of their work and recent success — a moving testament to the incredible work our community is doing. The agenda also includes short resource presentations and time for participants to caucus by

areas of interest. A discussion about the fight for marriage equality and its impact on all of the issues our community cares about was an engaging end for the meeting. Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the meeting was the networking of leaders who are working on similar issues in different areas.

"The coalition building and networking among organizations was important," said Janet Joyner of Carolinians Allied for Safe Schools and GLSEN Winston-Salem. "Good, non-partisan strategic work."

"I was both encouraged and energized by the number and diversity of organizations in our state that are actively engaged for LGBT citizens in advancing our civil rights, or providing much needed legal, educational, health and social services on many levels. It was an impressive group," she added.

Other Summit participants agreed the meeting was a success, and there was consensus that another summit should be held in six months. An e-mail listserv will also facilitate ongoing communication across regions.

"We realized that there were so many groups in North Carolina who are doing fantastic work, but they are often working in isolation," said Palmquist. "The Summit was a very successful vehicle for strengthening our movement by connecting our leaders and organizations across the state."

Groups interested in sending a representative to future summits should contact Ian Palmquist at Equality North Carolina: (919) 829-0343.



Summit participants discuss strategies for making public schools safe for LGBT students during a breakout session.